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Naval Service Medical News (NSMN) (96-24)  
20 June 1996

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Headline: NNMCM Bethesda Drive-Through Pharmacy Opens

NNMCM Bethesda, MD--Need to pick up a prescription? At National Naval Medical Center (NNMCM) Bethesda, MD, you can now do it without leaving your car.

The pharmacy at NNMCM has made major improvements in customer service over the last few months, including opening a drivethrough satellite facility where you pick up prescription refills without parking or getting out of your car.

"I see about 300 people a day here," said HM2 Jeffrey Dillon, USN, who works at the satellite facility. "The average wait is less than two minutes."

The drive-through can only be used to pick up prescription refills. New prescriptions must be picked up at the main pharmacy within NNMCM so that a pharmacist or technician may explain how to use the new medication.

In addition to the drive through, the main pharmacy has installed nine new service windows, bringing the total to 11. This allows patients to receive more privacy when they pick up their medication.

"Before, we'd have three, four people waiting at each (of the two windows)," said CDR Charles Hall, assistant department head for ambulatory care. "Sometimes it was too loud to even talk to a patient, much less counsel them about their medication with any privacy."

From NNMCM Bethesda Public Affairs

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Headline: Naval Hospital Okinawa Awarded Commendation

USNH Okinawa--United States Naval Hospital Okinawa was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation on 17 June for "consistently demonstrating unparalleled excellence in providing direct patient care support to nearly 200,000 beneficiaries in the Pacific region."

The commendation recognized the hospital for its performance from 1 April 1993 to 30 September 1994. During that time, the hospital initiated or improved a number of programs, including: spearheading inter-theater medical treatment facility cooperation and staff exchange programs; serving as the referral hospital for the Western Pacific region, particularly in the areas of Neonatal Intensive Care and Neurosurgery; initiating a fleet liaison program; and establishing 'Clinician Afloat' and 'Pierside Clinics,' which doubled access to care and significantly decreased lost work time.

"This commendation could very well have gone past September 1994 right up to the present day," said MGEN W.E. Rollings, USMC, Commanding General of Third Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF), who presented the award. "This hospital receives the highest number of compliments and fewest number of complaints I've ever been associated with." Story by HMCM(SW) M.C. Carr, USN, USNH Okinawa

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The Little Blue Card: Don't Leave Home Without It!

NH Jacksonville, FL (NSMN)--Naval Hospital Jacksonville wants to put plastic in the wallets of all of its active-duty service members and no, it's not a charge card.

It's a small plastic card that provides information about how active-duty service members receive urgent and emergency health care if they are find themselves away from a military treatment facility (MTF).

The plastic card identifies procedures for the active-duty member to receive medical treatment as well as procedures for the hospital or provider to get paid for the treatment rendered.

"Most active-duty service members don't really know what they are supposed to do if they require medical treatment at a civilian hospital," said Mr. Don Graham of NH Jacksonville's Managed Care Office. "Claims for active-duty are not paid for by CHAMPUS, but rather by the Office of Medical/Dental Affairs in Great Lakes, IL."

On one side of the card is instructions for the service member who needs medical treatment. On the flip side is procedures for the hospital or provider to file their claim. For emergency care, the service member goes directly to the hospital and provides the card to the provider. If routine medical or dental care is needed, prior approval from the Office of Medical/Dental Affairs is required.

According to Graham, NH Jacksonville's goal is to distribute this card to the 43,000 Sailors and Marines in the Jacksonville, FL area.

By LT Edie Rosenthal, USN, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

Public Affairs

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Headline: Quick Thinking Saves Life at Galley

NAS Jacksonville, FL--Quick thinking on the part of a corpsman may have saved a fellow Sailor's life last week.

HN Chad Poe, 23, who works at the Branch Medical Clinic at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, was in line with a friend at the galley when they were approached by another Sailor who was motioning that he was choking.

"I knew it wasn't a joke when I saw his face was purple," said HN Poe.

The corpsman quickly performed the Hemlich maneuver on the victim, dislodging the food that was choking him.

"He kept thanking me over and over again," said HN Poe.

"The people on the scene were calling me a hero. As far as I'm concerned, I was simply doing my job."

BY JO2 C.L. Brinkman, NAS Jacksonville

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Headline: USS GUAM and Navy Med Team Come to the Rescue

USS GUAM Off Liberia--Flight quarters aboard USS GUAM (LPH 9) secured at 11:30 p.m. on 6 June, 14 grueling hours after they'd begun. Steaming on Mamba Station, the ship is a part of Operation Assured Response, the United States' show of force off the coast of Liberia.

Just over three hours later, the air department was awakened, but this time, it wasn't for show: acting ambassador to Liberia John W. Fuhrer was having chest pains and difficulty breathing. He needed to be medevaced immediately.

"When flight quarters is called away at that time of the morning, we know something serious is going on," said ABH3 Evan S. Rodriguez on GUAM. "Within five to ten minutes of flight quarters being called away, we were on the flight deck ready to go."

A medical team of three--LT Willard G. Hession, MC, and HM1 Luis H. Najera from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 162 (HMM162) and another individual from Fleet Surgical Team Six (FST-6)--took off via helicopter for the Embassy and arrived by 4 a.m. Fuhrer was immediately brought on board the helicopter where he was hooked up to a heart monitor. It showed he was having heart irregularities.

"He had all the classic signs of a heart attack," Hession said.

Fuhrer was airlifted to GUAM where he received further medical attention.

Fuhrer remained on GUAM until he could be flown out to a shore facility. His prognosis is good.

By JO3 E. Michael Wagner, USS GUAM

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Headline: Naval Hospital Groton Named NCPB's Medical Facility of the Year

NH Groton--Naval Hospital Groton, CT was named the Navy's "Physical Evaluation Board's Medical Facility of the Year" for

medium and small facilities for 1996.

The Naval Council of Personnel Boards (NCPB), made up of the Board for the Correction of Naval Records, the Judicial Review Board, and the Physical Evaluation Board, presented NH Groton with the award last month. It is presented annually to recognize commands that excel in the preparation and submission of individuals records for medical board review at the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

The medical board reviews the records to see if Sailors or Marines should be returned to full or limited duty, or if they should be processed for separation or retirement.

By LT Thomas Kennedy, MSC, USNR, NH Groton

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Headline: Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Pharmacist Runs for Gold

Santa Barbara, CA--LT Barbara Kannewurf ran the 1,500 meters at this year's Women's Armed Forces Track and Field Meet and walked away with the gold.

Kannewurf, a pharmacist at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, VA, ran the race in 4:20.04 seconds, finishing 11 seconds over her nearest competitor.

The meet was held last month at Santa Barbara (CA) Community College and drew competitors from all the armed forces.

Last October, Kannewurf qualified for the 1996 U.S. Olympics Marathon Trials, with a time of 2:27:02. She is currently nationally ranked at two distances, 10,000 meters and 5 miles.

Also winning a gold was high jumper LT Julie Althoff of Naval Hospital Bremerton, WA. Althoff jumped 1.60 meters, .13 meters higher than the Army silver medalist.

From NMC Portsmouth Public Affairs and American Forces Press Service

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Headline: Officer Frocking Limitation Policy to Go Into Effect

Washington DC (NNS)--Officers selected for promotion by the FY97 selection boards will be the first to be affected by the new frocking limitations. Guidelines for frocking are explained in NAVADMIN 125/96 and are expected to remain in force through FY99. The FY96 Defense Authorization Act limits frocking of officers selected for promotion.

Frocking of these officers to lieutenant through rear admiral (lower half) must be specifically approved by the Chief of Naval Personnel (CNP). To be eligible, officers must be on a selection list for the higher grade, confirmed by the Senate (for O4 through O7) and occupying or ordered to a billet for the higher grade.

NAVADMIN 125/96 lists billet criteria and precedence for available frocking quotas, procedures for requesting frocking authority, the format for delivering the frocking and categories of personnel who are not eligible.

For all but O7s, frocking authority will usually be

announced by NAVADMIN, similar to the method used to authorize the monthly officer promotion increment. Authority to frock O7 confirmed selectees will be provided by CNP through BUPERS Flag Matters Office (PERS-OOF). The policies become effective following approval by the Secretary of the Navy.

By LT Kelly Watson, Bureau of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

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Headline: Separation of HIV-Positive Service Members No Longer Mandatory

Washington DC (NWSA) -- NAVADMIN 142/96 formally announces the repeal of the provision of the FY96 Defense Authorization Act that required discharging all HIV-positive personnel serving in the armed forces within six months of testing positive and not later than Aug. 31 for those already HIV-positive on or before Feb. 10, 1996.

Navy policy regarding the evaluation, assignment and retention of HIV-positive personnel remains as initially outlined in SECNAVINST 5300.30C.

From Bureau of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

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Headline: General Medical Officer's Manual is Available

BUMED Washington, DC (NSMN)--If you're an operational medical officer or a graduating intern, the third edition of the General Medical Officer's (GMO) Manual is on its way to you.

The manual provides basic guidelines on administrative procedures for certain medical processes, such as competency for duty on a ship, and is also a quick clinical reference. It is conveniently formatted in a standard 11 by 8 1/2 inch, 3 hole size for ease of use and filing.

GMO who have not received the manual by the end of July should call the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery at (202) 762 3064/1 or DSN 762-3064/1.

By LCDR Elizabeth Liotta, MC, USN, Bureau of Medicine and

Surgery -usn-

Headline: Healthwatch: Get the Most From Your Sunglasses

St. Louis (NWSB) -- Despite what the fashion industry says, one pair of good sunglasses is all most people need.

"If you participate frequently in a particular sport, then investing in sunglasses designed specifically for that sport may be worthwhile. But it's probably not necessary for the weekend golfer or tennis player," says Leo Semes, O.D., of the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry and a sunglasses consultant to the American Optometric Association.

The basics people need in sunglass lenses are:

-- 99-100 percent protection from the sun's ultraviolet radiation, both UV-A and UV-B;

-- darkness sufficient to screen out 75 to 90 percent of visible light; and

-- lenses matched in color for uniform transmittance and free of distortion or imperfection.

Options the wearer may consider:

-- Wrap-around lenses and frames. They provide UV protection and screen light from the side. For sports, they may stay on better than regular frames.

-- Polycarbonate sun lenses. These are the toughest lenses, making them a good choice for eye hazardous sports and other activities, like gardening or other outdoor work.

-- Polarizing lenses. They effectively combat reflected glare and can be an advantage for those who do a lot of driving, boating or fishing.

-- Photochromic lenses. These darken or lighten with the amount of light, a convenient feature for some people. Outdoor workers who want this type of lens should get industrial-strength plastic photochromics mounted in safety frames.

-- Mirror coatings. Lenses with this coating are primarily for wear under intense glare from snow or water.

Dr. Semes offered these additional sunglass buying tips:

-- Don't be misled by UV labels. Ask your optometrist's advice or buy sunglasses where calibrated equipment is available to check the lenses' UV protection capabilities.

-- Check lenses to be sure the tint is uniform, not darker in one area than another. With gradient lenses, which are a good choice for high altitude sports, be sure the tint lightens gradually from top to bottom.

-- Hold the glasses at arm's length. Look through them at a straight line in the distance, such as the edge of a door. Slowly move the lens across the line. If the straight edge distorts, sways, curves or moves, the lens has imperfections.

-- To be sure the lenses block enough light, try them on in front of a mirror. If you can see your eyes through the lenses, they probably aren't dark enough for glare reduction. Story courtesy of American Optometric Association

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Headline: TRICARE Questions and Answers

Q. What is a TRICARE Service Center? What assistance should I expect to get from them?

A. TRICARE Service Centers (TSC) provide information about TRICARE and your health care benefits for you, as a member or former member of the uniformed services, and your family. Some of the services Customer Service Representatives and Health Care Finders who staff the TSC provide include: advice on which of the three TRICARE options is best for you and your family, arrange medical appointments, TRICARE Prime enrollment assistance, issuance of TRICARE Prime enrollment cards, issuance of Non-Availability Statements, and referral to health care providers who accept Medicare patients. They also have TRICARE Standard (CHAMPUS) claims representatives with an on-line computer link to the claims processing center in your region to assist with filing TRICARE Standard claims. Most staff members are health care professionals, and ensure you receive the privacy you need when discussing your own and your family's health. TSC are located near most Military Treatment Facilities and also in areas with high beneficiary populations.

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